



PRECISION L-BAND DME TESTS

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FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION TECHNICAL CENTER
Atlantic City, N. J. 08405





INTERIM REPORT

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PREFACE

The author wishes to acknowledge Mr. Ron Polillo of the Range Programming and Analysis Branch, ACT-750, who was responsible for the programming which generated the flight plots in this report.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to determine the system accuracy of L-Band Precision Distance Measuring Equipment (PDME) utilizing a modified Aerocom model 5351A DME ground transponder.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Technical Center, in coordination with the Systems Research and Development Service (SRDS), tested a C-band DME for range measurement accuracy in accordance with Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA) specifications prepared by the Special Committee, SC-117. Previous testing in 1974 at the Technical Center and Crows Landing, California, showed that an L-band DME would be simpler and more economical to implement (related final report, Contract No. WI-74-1245-1, "Experimentation for Use of L-Band DME with the Microwave Landing System," April 1974).

These 1974 tests resulted in the selection of a cos/cos² shaped pulse for Microwave Landing System (MLS)/(L-Band) The Bendix Avionics Division, in coordination with Aerocom, modified a standard model 5351 DME ground transponder to operate specifically as a DME system applicable to MLS/DME. The design also provides the necessary stability and an overall accuracy of 100 feet (2 sigma), which was incorporated into the specification, when used with the Bendix airborne MLS/DME interrogator. The Aerocom DME is one of several ground transponders undergoing accuracy tests.

DESCRIPTION OF EQUIPMENT

The Aerocom 5351A DME was modified for MLS/DME operation and redesigned to

provide a first pulse output of a \cos/\cos^2 wave shape and a second pulse of a \cos^2 wave shape. The first pulse provides a fast rise time on the start of the pulse and a \cos^2 shape for the rest of the pulse. Designers increased the ground receiver band width from 0.35 megahertz (MHz) to 3.5 MHz to pass the higher frequencies of the \cos/\cos^2 wave shape transmitted for the airborne interrogator.

To optimize the DME accuracy of the ground transponder, the reply delay is automatically maintained by the system signal generator as a source pulse, thus automatically maintaining system reply delay. In the normal configuration, an identification keyer is provided. The keyer was not utilized during this test.

TECHNICAL APPROACH

To determine the accuracy of an L-Band PDME several tests were conducted. Three primary areas were tested:

- 1. Static Tests. These tests were conducted utilizing a mobile van with an adjustable antenna mast. The van collected data at specially surveyed test points (TP) to determine accuracy at various antenna heights and distances from the PDME.
- 2. Stability Tests. To determine the overall accuracy of the PDME system over a period of time, a calculator programmed to take a specified number of samples was used. An error mean and error standard deviation was obtained from the results.
- 3. Flight Tests. Test flights consisting of orbits, radials, and approaches were made to determine the system accuracies under varying flight conditions. Tracking to obtain absolute accuracy was performed by use of a Sylvania mobile laser tracker.

Van instrumentation (shown in figure 1) was used to collect static data at all TP's (see figure 2). DME information for accuracy was collected at several surveyed TP's located on taxiway "B" parallel to runway 13/31.

The programmed Hewlett Packard 9830 calculator (figure 1) was used to collect samples of size 200 DME range error data at each of nine antenna heights at each test point shown in figure 2. The mean and standard deviation of each sample were then calculated.

Technicians positioned the adjustable antenna tower, mounted on the rear of the test van, over the surveyed test points. The antenna height varied from 45 to 5 feet in 5-foot increments. A calibrated meter with a light-emitting diode (LED) readout attached to the antenna mast measured the exact height above each test point.

The airborne interrogator, a Bendix MLS/DME precision interrogator system, is designed to function as a navigational aid while en route, and to provide precise MLS/DME range upon arrival at the airport. From 0 to 5 nautical miles (nmi), which is the range of the MLS/DME precision mode, system accuracies are specified to be ±50 feet (2 sigma). Beyond 5 nmi, during normal mode operation, accuracies are ±0.1 nmi or 0.2 percent of the indicated range.

Because accurate airborne interrogator test equipment was not available, a TS-101C tactical air navigation aid (TACAN) simulator was utilized to operationally check the airborne interrogator.

The video output of the Bendix airborne receiver was monitored visually to note any unusual occurrences during the test, such as susceptibility to multipath and erroneous range indication.

Tests were made to determine if any significant changes in stability occurred over a period of time that would adversely affect the transmittal of distance information. A block diagram of the test setup utilized is shown in figure 3. A 9830 Hewlett Packard calculator programmed to accept 1,000 samples of DME information during each 2-minute period produced, from the samples, an error mean and error standard deviation.

Using table 1, a series of four tests were made with the three receivers. In the series, technicians adjusted the signal input to the interrogator receiver in upward steps at approximately -45 decibels above 1 milliwatt (dBm), -60 dBm, -65 dBm, and -77 dBm. To reach the desired signal level for each receiver, testors read the automatic gain control (AGC) voltage meter, while adjusting the attenuator, until the desired level was reached, as interpreted from figure 4. The plots shown in figure 4 were obtained by injecting a signal from the TS-101C simulator and recording the corresponding AGC voltage. The plots were utilized in formulating the data shown in table 1.

FLIGHT TESTS

The airborne instrumentation package (figure 5), which consists of a Kennedy 7-track recorder, real-time clock interface, and a Bendix MLS/DME airborne interrogator was installed on a Convair 580 for flight test data collection. The instruments collected data during orbits, approaches, "river runs," and selected radials at the Washington National Airport, Washington, D.C. At the airport, a Sylvania mobile laser tracking system recorded data on the aircraft position to an accuracy of ±1 foot for 0-5 nmi, ±2 feet for 5-10 nmi, and ±5 feet for 10 to 25 nmi.

TABLE 1. INTERROGATOR TESTS

Interrogator	Mode	Precision						Normal)					
Interr	4			9	-62	-63	-58	6 5	-65	89	-11	-76	-78
	AGC	1.31	0.38	1.11	1.85	0.88	1.52	1.81	1.07	1.71	2.17	1.36	1.99
	Standard Deviation (ft)	7.58	11.38	22.66	15.48	18.33	17.11	14.60	19.93	19.32	36.26	40.95	50.13
	Mean Error (ft)	31.96	66.59	62.13	18.90	88.89	9.57	20.94	74.25	57.75	17.86	112.07	90.07
Semple	Pilot Readout	1.60 (9730)	(9767)	(1926)	1.60 (9718)	1.62 (9791)	1.59 (9712)	60 (9721)	.61 (9774)	61 (9756)	1.60 (9718)		
	 .							9700					
	Interrogator Serial No.	601	\$	103	109	104	103	109	18	103	109	10 5	103
	Test	-			7			Э			4		

STATIC TEST RESULTS

Static test results include laboratory tests made in building 301 and those made at test points on the airport. Figure 6 shows sample plots of static accuracy data recorded at the surveyed test points TP-90 and TP-108 (shown in figure 2). Based on reflectometer measurements, a total of 186 feet was subtracted from the error data to correct for the 125-foot length of cable between the receiver and the antenna. The results of which show an average mean error of ±50 feet and a standard error deviation of ±5 feet for all pole heights and test points.

No range errors due to reflections or other abnormalities were observed during this test. The signal strength ranged from -36 dBm at test point 90 at an antenna height of 15 feet, to a low of -85 dBm at test point 108 with the antenna at 10 feet above the surveyed test point. Figure 7 is a plot of the signal strength versus the pole height of the antenna to the test van antenna, at various heights and at two different test points, TP-90 and TP-116. A signal level of -36 dBm would be representative of the MLS/DME interrogator in the precision mode.

Three interrogator receivers were tested to determine if significant changes in the system accuracy occurred between them. A change of ±50 feet is considered significant. Table 1 is a comparison of the readouts a pilot would see and the calculated error means and The data in the standard deviations. table shows that a variation of 79 feet in mean error of system accuracy did occur between different interrogators while in the precision mode, and 95 feet in the normal mode. This variation was obtained by subtracting the high mean error and low mean error in both the precision and normal modes. Receiver sensitivity in the MLS precision and normal modes is -60 dBm and -80 dBm, respectively.

FLIGHT TEST RESULTS

Test results for each type flight are tabulated in table 2. Where appropriate, path following range error statistics are calculated for both 0 to 5 and 5 to 10 nmi for each flight type. In addition, summary range error standard deviation is calculated for each flight type. No determination could be made as to the cause of shifts in bias from approximately 200 feet on March 28, 1979, to approximately 10 feet on July 9, 1979. Although there were variations in bias, the overall system accuracy of the collected DME data, with all bias removed, was as shown in table The error values were calculated by using all data of each type of flight. Bendix engineers investigated the significant decrease in error means in the July data, but could not find the cause. Manufacturer's equipment specifications set processing accuracy of ±35 feet bias (-10 to -50 dBm) and ±30 feet for noise (standard deviation). The length of cable in the aircraft was not deducted from the calculations.

Figure 8 shows sample plots of data collected during the Washington National Airport test flights. Scatter plots, figure 9, show individual point plots of filtered data with bias removed (zero means) of all runs of each type flight.

To determine system accuracy, MLS/DME precision equipment design required that data be separated into two bins; 0 to 5 nmi and 5 to 10 nmi. The first bin contains precision mode data, while the second bin contains nonprecision mode data. Histogram plots required bin data to be grouped. In this instance, 0.5 nmi increments were selected. Plotted by flight type and bin range, histograms of figure 10 show error distribution with zero means. The summary standard

TABLE 2. FLIGHT TEST DATA TABULATION OF RANGE ERROR

•		0 - 5	nmi	<u>5 - 10 nmi</u>				
Type of Flight	Flight Date	Mean X	Standard Deviation	No. of Data Pt.	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Data Pt.	
Approaches	3/28/79	189.595	6.686	278	258.925	68.285	123	
	3/28/79	186.987	6.742	275	219.906	39.754	200	
	3/28/79	191.361	14.438	470	201.825	79.193	172	
	4/30/79	295.853	12.485	441	277.529	62.895	373	
	4/30/79	289.325	19.746	282	261.340	101.883	466	
	7/9/79	15.516	8.972	982	9.060	16.503	512	
	7/9/79	10.385	5.349	157	15.571	14.072	104	
Orbits	5/1/79				316.406	36.103	479	
	5/1/79	 .			148.310	16.015	449	
	7/3/79				40.211	49.068	137	
	10/25/79				57.905	49.612	1248	
Radials	3/28/79	173.332	2.762	134	182.104	19.580	94	
	4/30/79	276.710	7.832	69	278.803	9.729	197	
	4/30/79	270.639	· 2.510	82	264.119	19.047	135	
	7/3/79	128.322	2.501	41	133.456	9.041	165	
	7/3/79	129.384	4.551	200	132.526	17.234	560	
River Runs	3/28/79	186.089	4.395	483	200.888	40.919	325	
·	4/30/79	293.577	6.098	258	285.399	11.301	278	
	7/3/79	61.239	1.520	73	53.008	11.439	121	
	7/9/79	21.551	8.902	193	-4.398	25.269	68	
·	7/10/79	73.297	8.978	1110	55.839	43.979	205	
All Approaches			9.129	2885		42.649	1950	
All Orbits		100 400				41.714	2313	
All Radials			2.935	526		12.031	1151	
All River Runs			3.776	2117		18.255	997	

TABLE 3. FLIGHT TEST DATA SUMMARY

Type of Flight	Range Error Std Deviation (ft) 0 to 5 nmi	Range Error Std Deviation (ft) 5 to 10 nmi			
Approaches	"9	±42			
Orbits	No Data	±42			
Radials	±3	±12			
River Runs	± 4	±18			

deviations of table 2 relate to these plots. These are normal distributions. Identification keyer effect was not determined on DME transponder accuracy.

STABILITY TEST RESULTS

The data shown in figure 11 were calculated from data collected in the MLS laboratory in building 301. The 9830 Hewlett Packard calculator was programmed to accept 1,000 samples of DME information each 2-minute period for approximately 20 hours, and then produced a mean and standard deviation. Five of the means were averaged to produce a mean of the differences and a standard deviation. The plot shown in figure 12 is a result of these calculations. The results show a high degree of stability over the test The standard deviation of the period. group was 27.47 feet. No erroneous distance measurements were recorded due to reflections or any other abnormalities during the test.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on these tests, it was concluded that:

- 1. The data collected during static and flight tests provided an adequate data base for measuring system accuracy.
- 2. Static test measurements of mean error for the system exceeded 100 feet with a 1-sigma standard deviation of as much as ± 50 feet.
- 3. The flight test data showed mean errors from 10 feet to more than 200 feet, with standard deviation of as much as 20 feet. However, if mean errors were removed, the standard deviation for one sigma error, 0 to 5 nmi, would be ±3 feet during radials and ±9 feet during approaches.
- 4. The static data showed variations of as much as 79 feet when the airborne interrogator was in the precision mode.

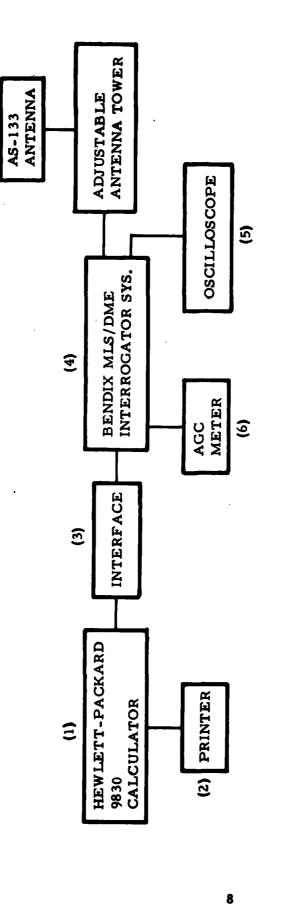
RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Further testing be conducted to determine the effects on system accuracy during ident times.
- 2. Testing be continued to determine the reasons for shifts in bias.

3. Action be initiated to obtain or modify existing simulators to perform as a test set for Precision Distance Measuring Equipment (PDME).

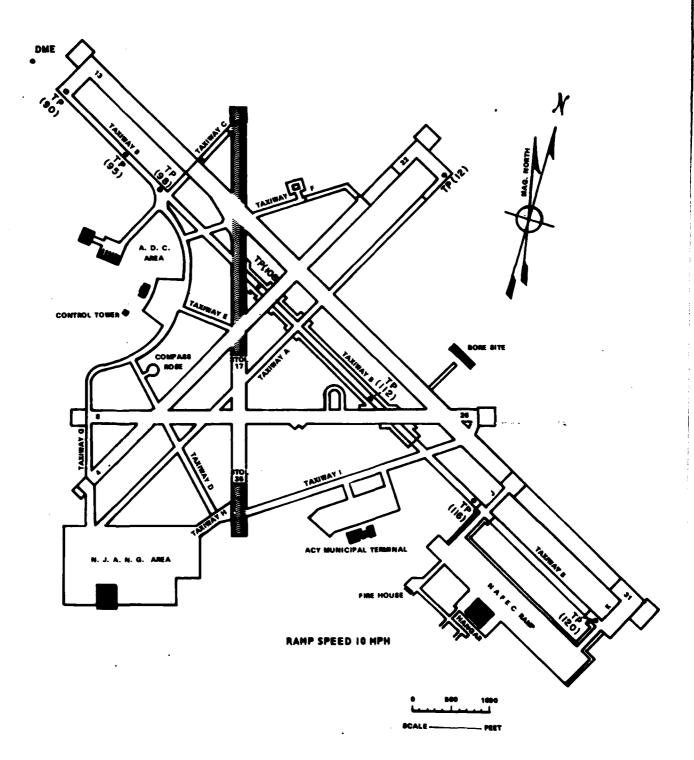
This project was accomplished under Technical Program Document (TPD) 04-309,

subprogram 075-725-810. For further information, contact Harold Postel, ACT-100B.1, or Edward M. Sawtelle, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Technical Center Program Manager, ACT-100B.1, telephone FTS 8-346-3913, commercial (609) 641-8200, extension 3913.



- HEWLETT-PACKARD 9830 CALCULATOR HEWLETT-PACKARD 9866 PRINTER 3.5.

 - LABORATORY INTERFACE
- MLS/DME PRECISION INTERROGATOR SYSTEM 4. 7. 0
 - HEWLETT-PACKARD 1741 OSCILLOSCOPE
 - HEWLETT-PACKARD 5328 COUNTER



MAFEC/ATLANTIC CITY AIRPORT, ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY

NA FORM 5320-1 (6-69)

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FIGURE 2. TAXIWAY TEST POINTS

HEWLETT-PACKARD 9830 DESKTOP COMPUTER 4 u C C u L

LOCALLY FABRICATED INTERFACE ANALOG TO DIGITAL CONVERSION

MLS/DME PRECISION SYSTEM, 2041118-1101

HORN ANTENNA L-BAND

HEWLETT-PACKARD THERMAL PRINTER

VARIABLE ATTENUATOR

80-25-4

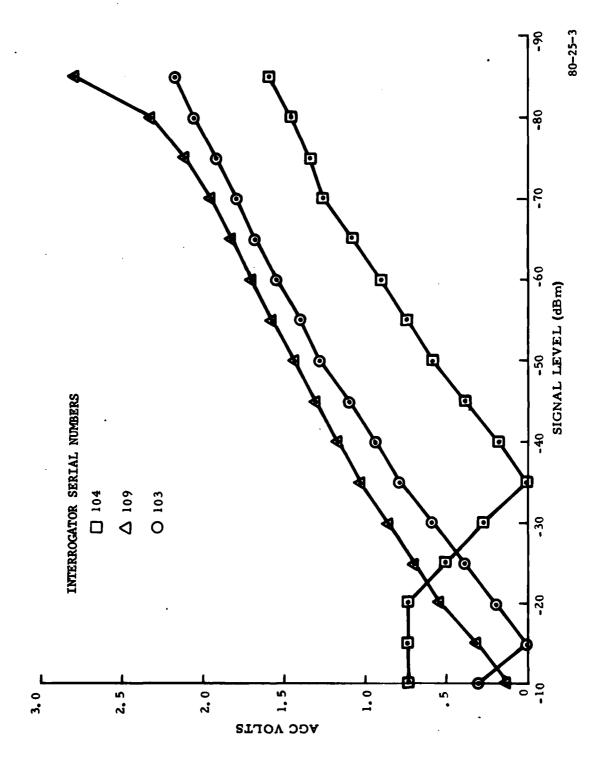


FIGURE 4. SIGNAL LEVEL VERSUS AGC VOLTAGE

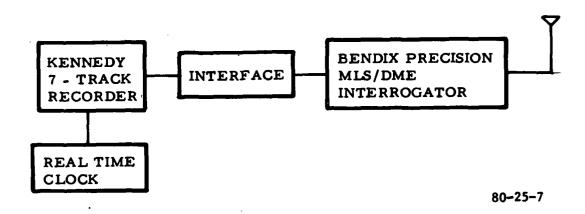


FIGURE 5. AIRBORNE INSTRUMENTATION PACKAGE

MLS PRECISION L-BAND DME (HEROCOM) DRTE 7-17-78 Z= -19.658 SURVEY POINT 188

X= 4681,745 Y= -293.161

BENDIX INTERROGHTOR 5/N 114

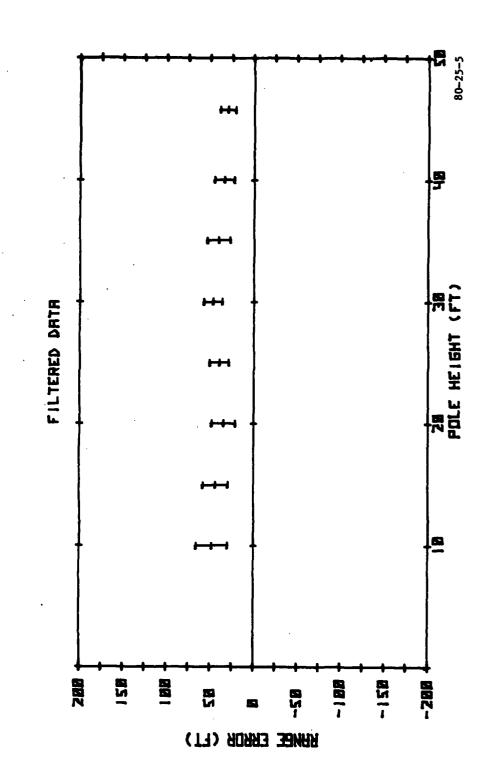


FIGURE 6. VAN DATA PLOTS (SHEET 1 OF 2)

MLS PRECISION L-BAND DME (REROCOM) DATE 7-12-78 2= -12.198 SLIRVEY PDINT \$ 90 XX | 1801.745 Y= -293.161 BENDIX INTERROGHTOR 5/N 114

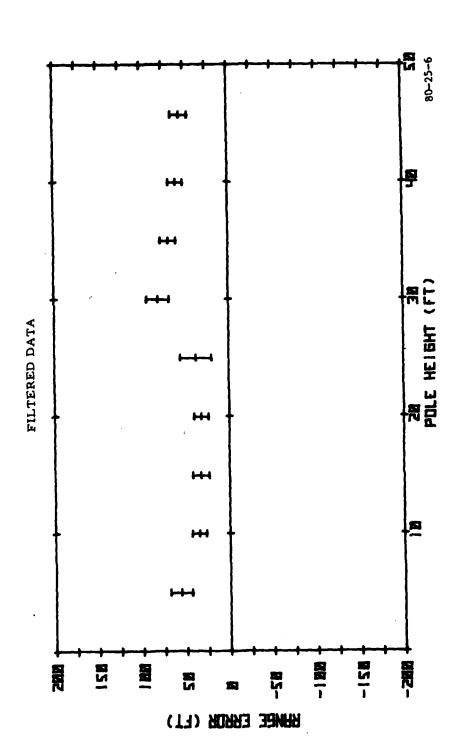


FIGURE 6. VAN DATA PLOTS (SHEET 2 OF 2)

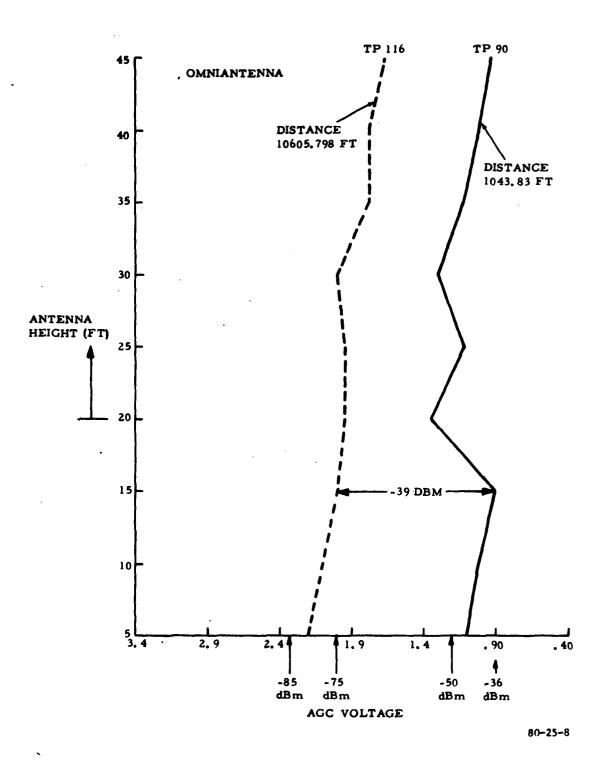
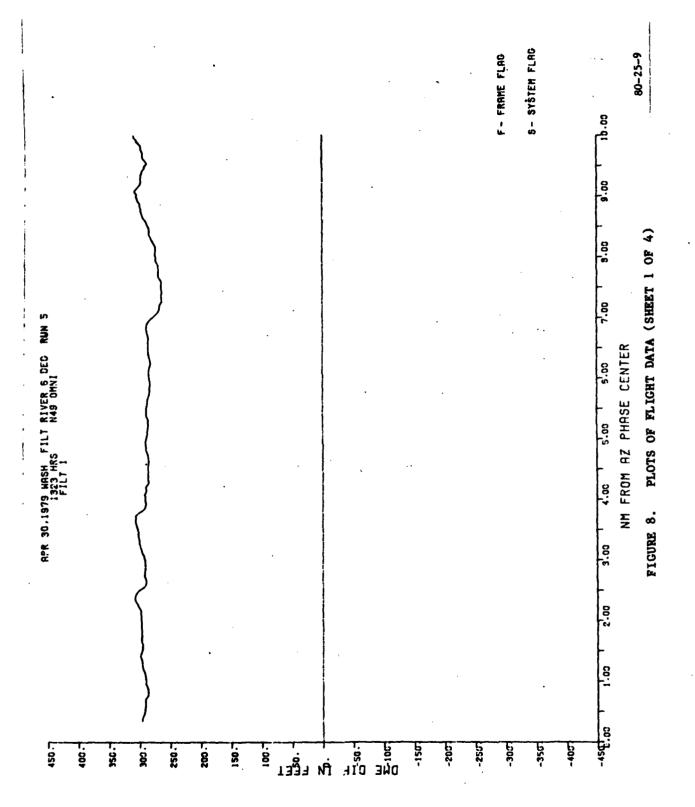


FIGURE 7. PLOT OF ANTENNA HEIGHT VERSUS SIGNAL STRENGTH, BENDIX INTERROGATOR SN-104



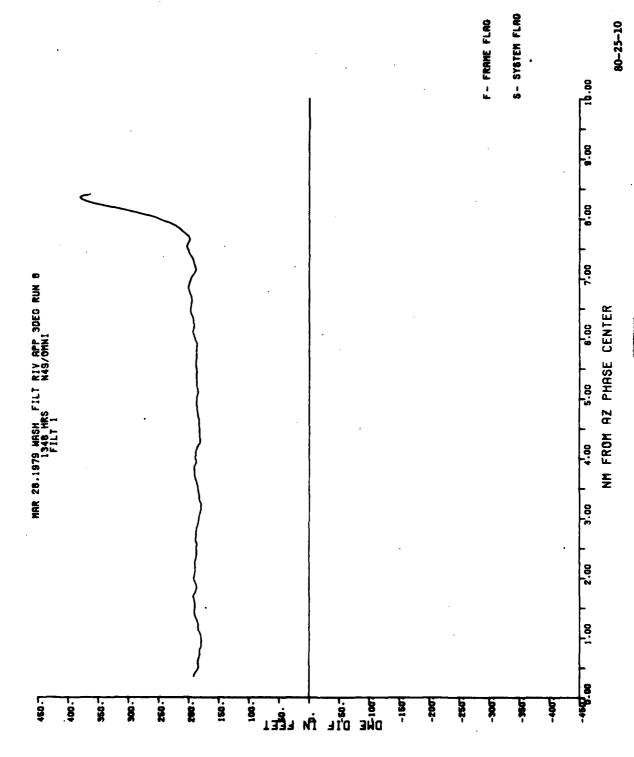
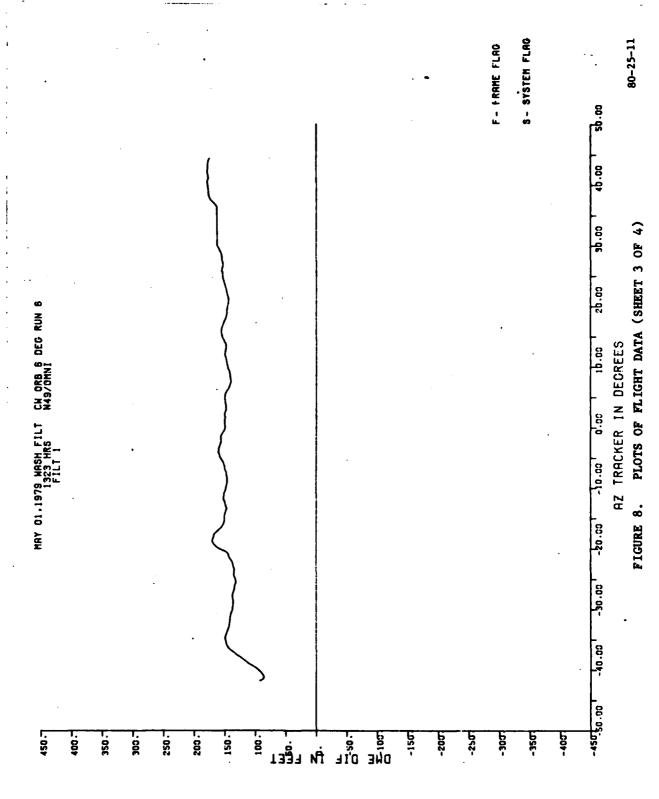


FIGURE 8. PLOTS OF FLIGHT DATA (SHEET 2 OF 4)



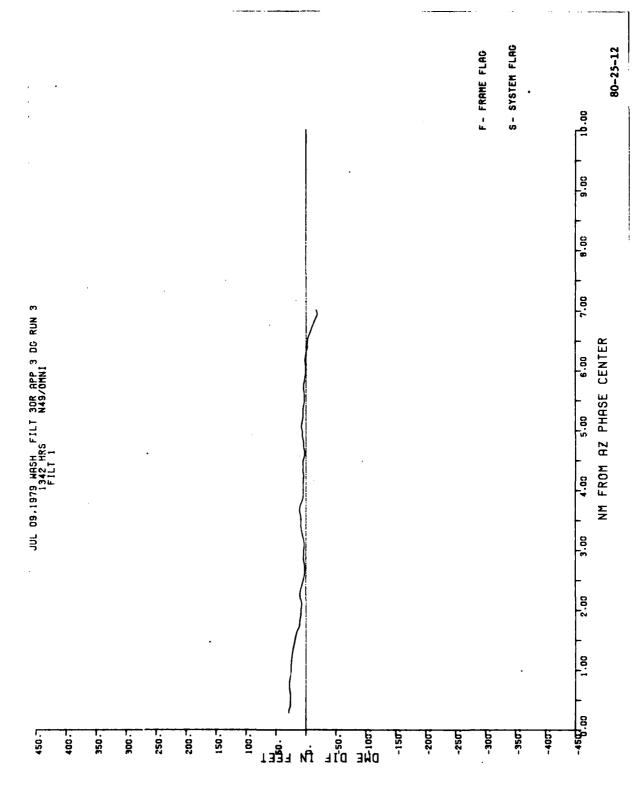


FIGURE 8. PLOTS OF FLIGHT DATA (SHEET 4 OF 4)

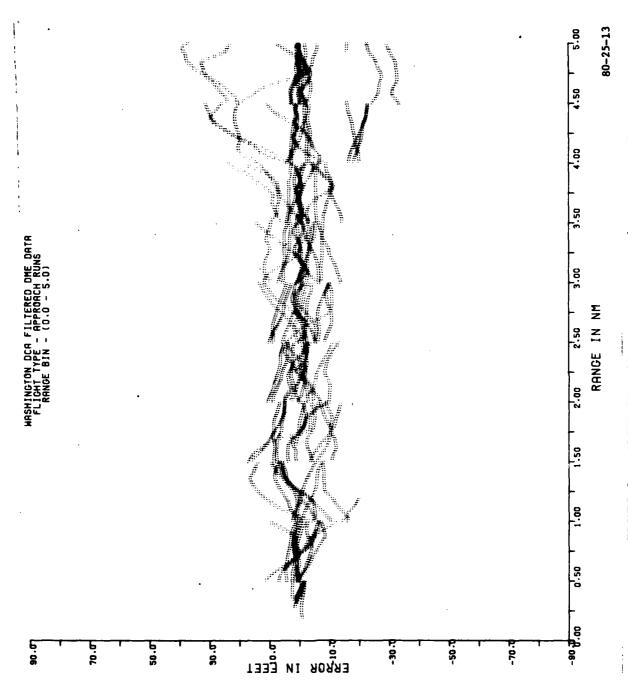


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 1 OF 6)

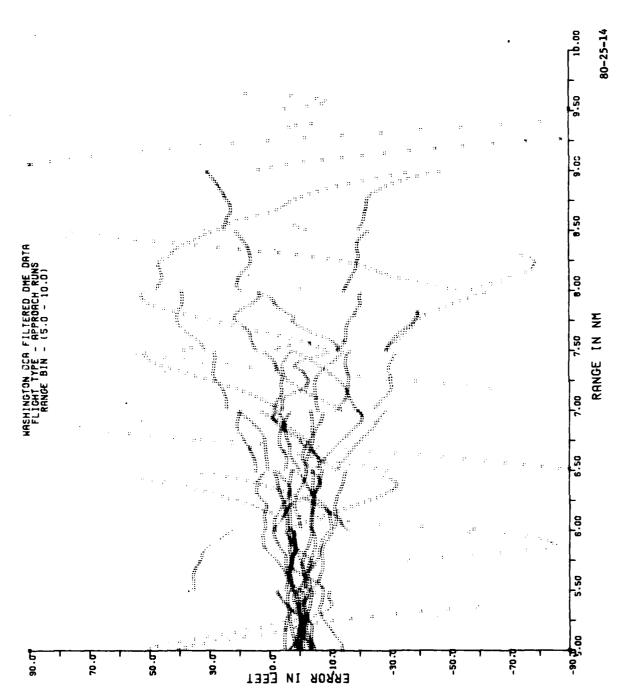


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 2 OF 6)

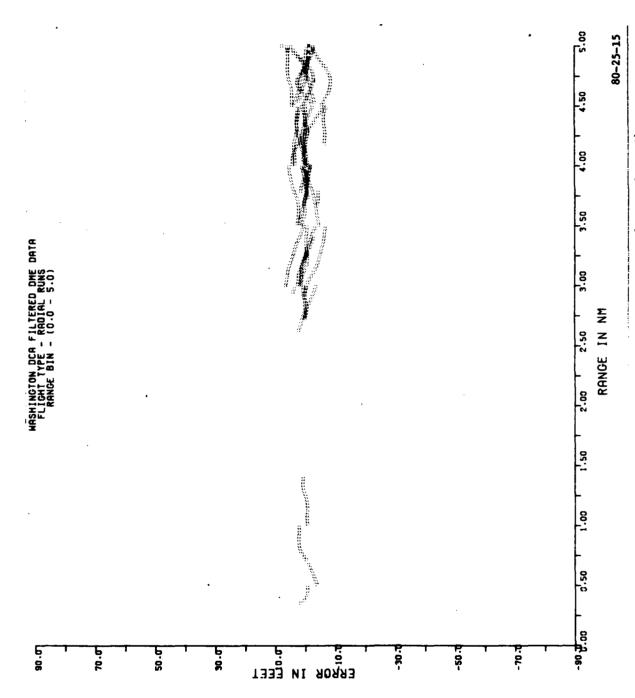


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 3 OF 6)

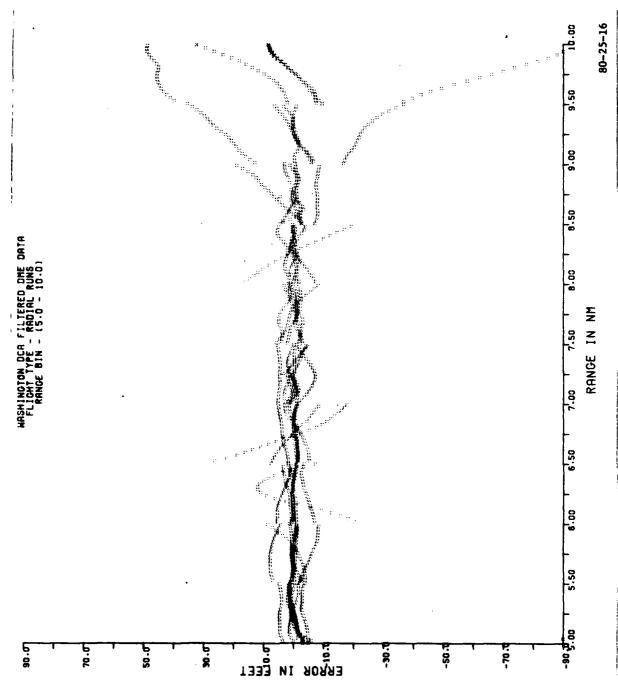


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 4 OF 6)

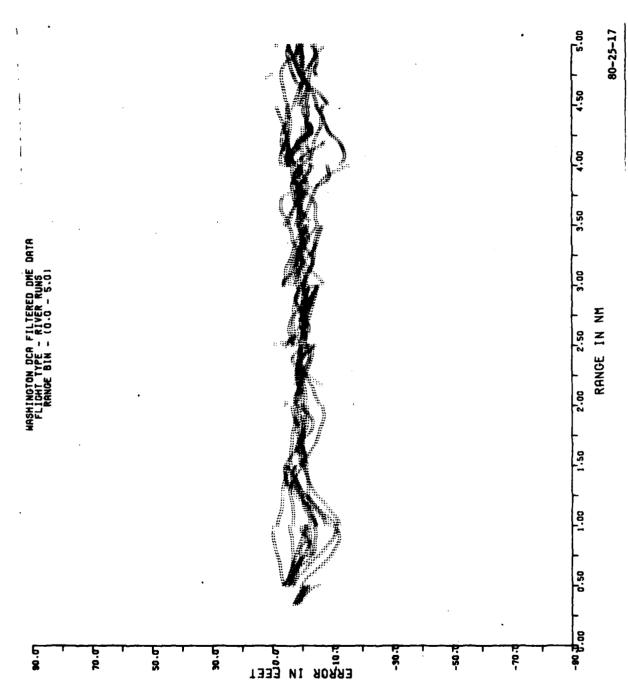


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 5 OF 6)

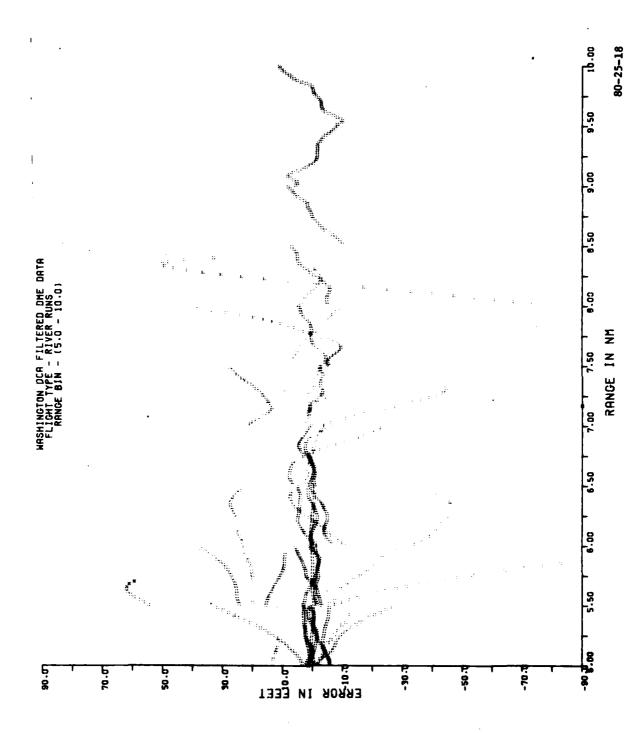
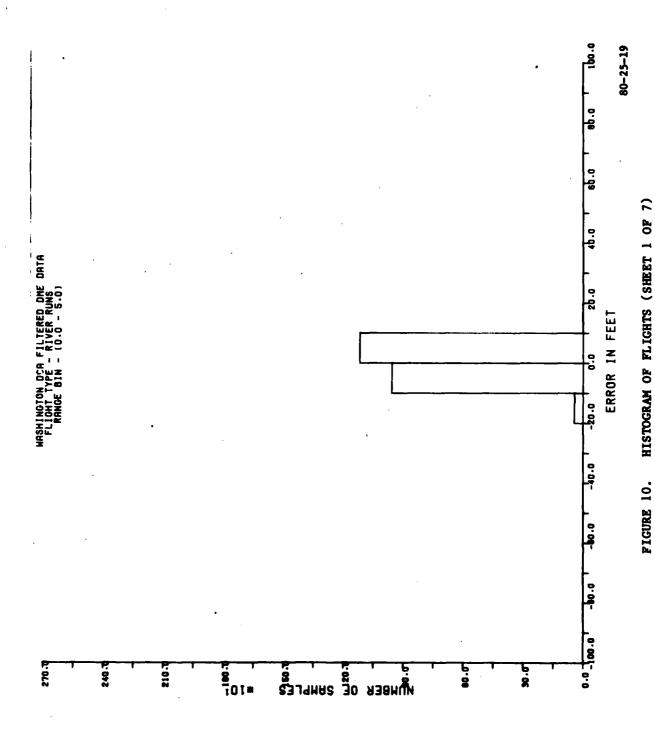
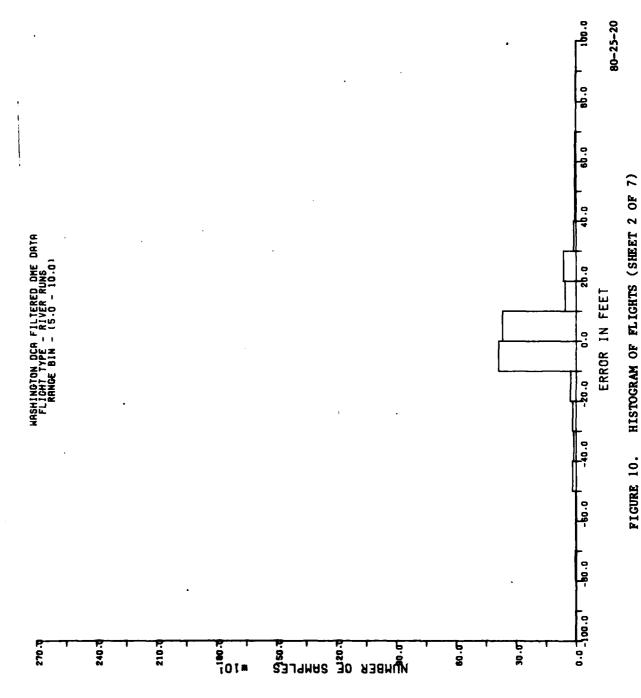


FIGURE 9. PLOTS OF FLIGHT SCATTER DATA (SHEET 6 OF 6)





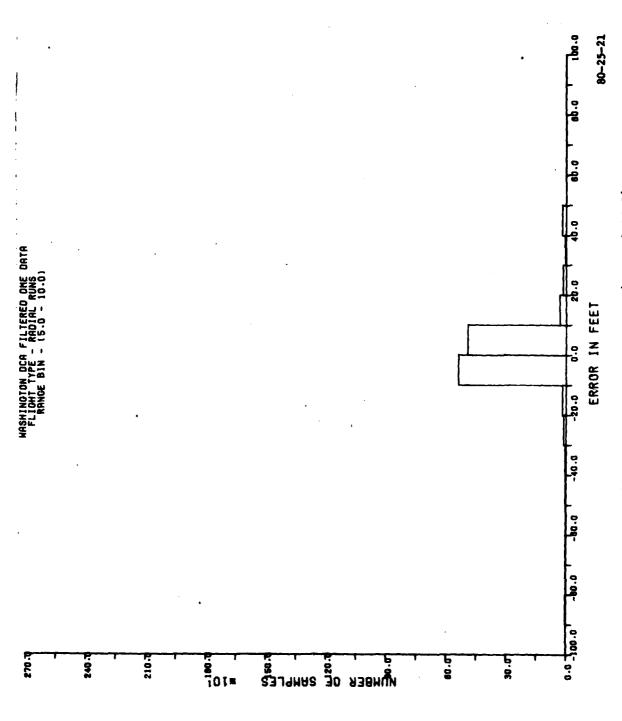
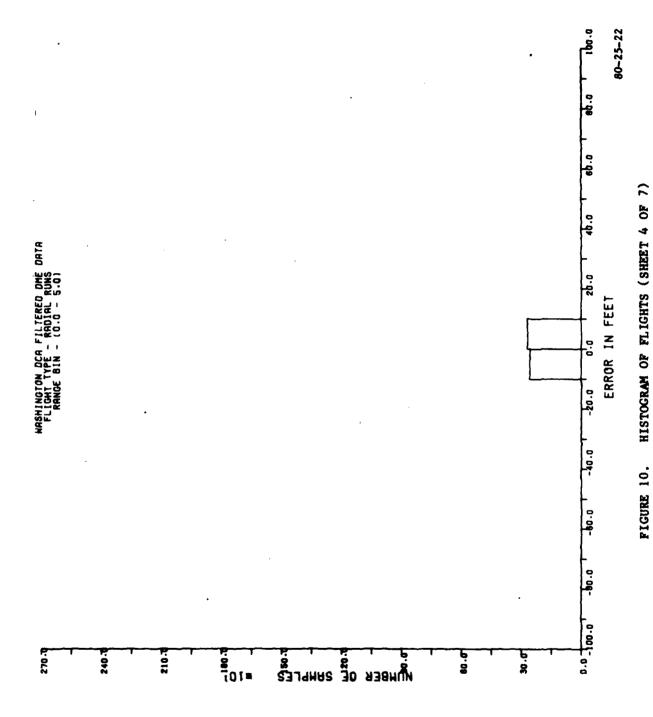
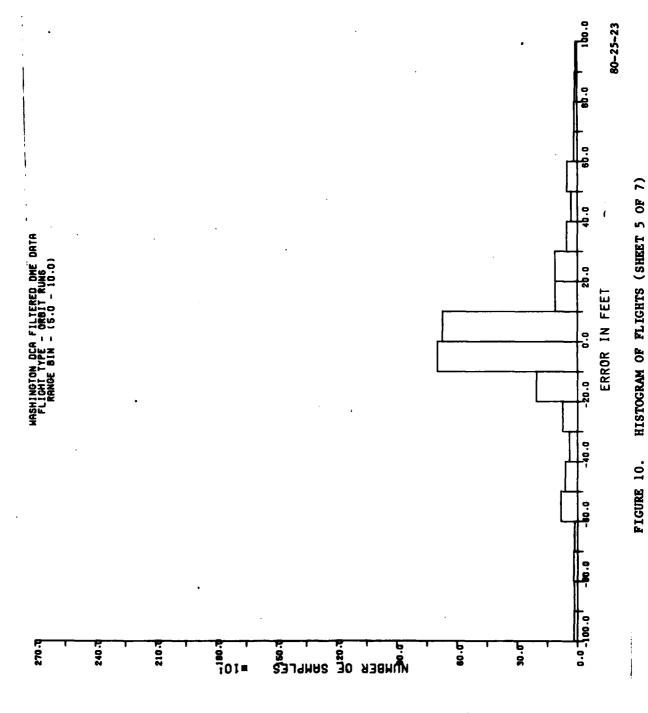
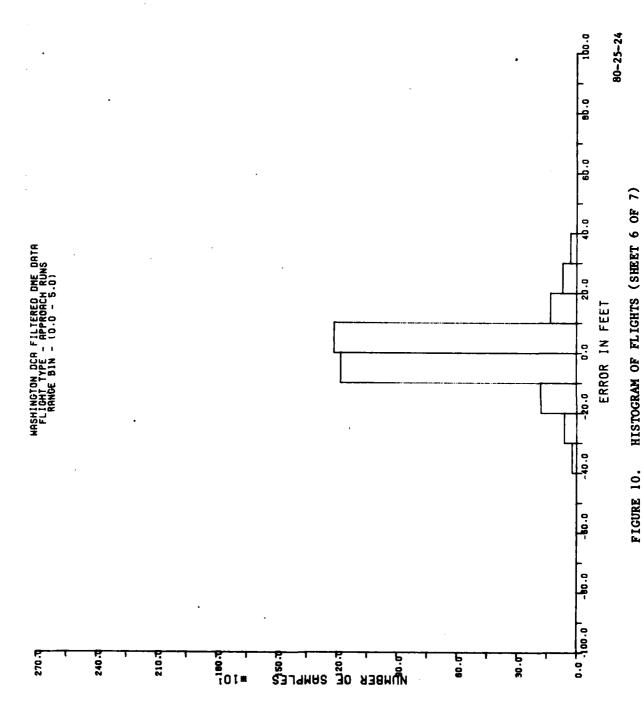


FIGURE 10. HISTOGRAM OF FLIGHTS (SHEET 3 OF 7)







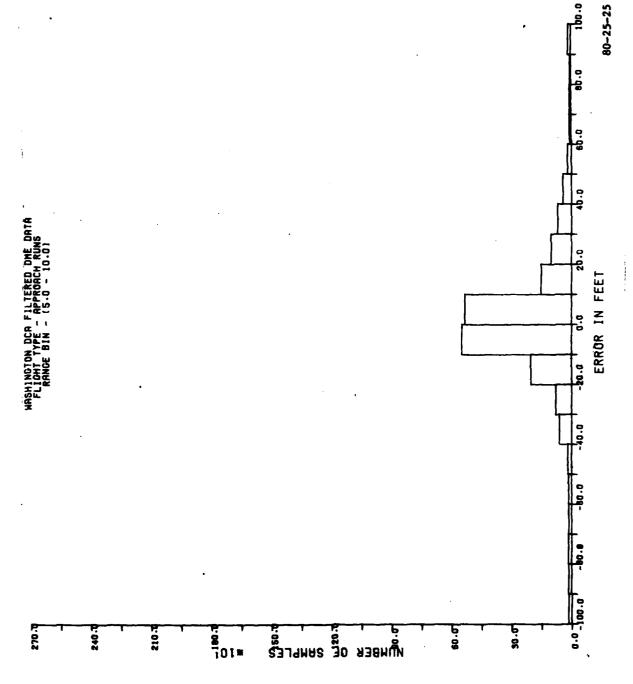


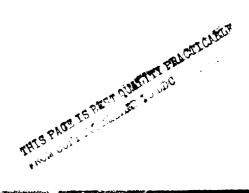
FIGURE 10. HISTOGRAM OF FLIGHTS (SHEET 7 OF 7)

PRECISION DME STABILITY TEST DATE OF TEST 11/15/78 TYPE - AEROCOM RANGE - 9559.823708

		MEAN OF DIFF	STAND DEU
3/404 6			
SAMPLE	1	501.20627730	27.92836452
Sample	2	494.60206840	24.95668795
SAMPLE	2	495.14230240	23.19967858
SAMPLE	4	506.99103020	23.89018329
SAMPLE			
	3 6 7	512.02309740	24.92077967
SHMPLE	5	505.49779980	25.24851504
SAMPLE	7	503.18511200	26.2 9 222476
SAMPLE	8	506.58433710	24.74976879
SAMPLE	ġ	513.35243730	24.42382688
SANFLE	10	517.19477570	24.57177260
eample	11	517.33439600	24.45273650
SAMPLE	12	487.70649730	22.30284055
SAMPLE	13	480.50135488	21.95234419
SAMPLE	14	598.87891419	24.46335831
SAMPLE	15	507.37344388	24.77697925
SAMPLE	iŝ	508.28394970	24.59330076
SAMPLE	17	515.30092179	24.69526240
SAMPLE	18	520.12053748	
			25.24528277
Sample	19	519.37392190	25.26297976
SAMPLE	20	517.58932868	25.78321388
SAMPLE	21	509.86323150	24.67546919
SAMPLE	22	514.97313930	24.97225688
	27	E12 71500350	
SAMPLE	23	512.71508250	24.56640650
SAMPLE	24	511.73173539	26.50628594
Sample	25	512.52084110	24.78753633
SAMPLE	26	512.02916750	26.84336095
SAMPLE	27	513.12177560	25.63448206
SAMPLE	28	510.20208390	26.98326188
Sample	29	511.932 04 67 0	23.92634901

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FIGURE 11. SAMPLE DATA OF DME STABILITY TESTS (SHEET 1 OF 3)



```
30
               512.34480980
                                  24.58438928
         31
SAMPLE
               513.12784560
                                  24.34384536
         32
33
sample
                                  27.12437281
               515.00955950
                                  27.93334699
SAMPLE
               516.64847179
SAMPLE
         34
               519.00971920
                                  26.17876458
         35
SAMPLE
               488.83552570
                                  22.32311458
         36
SAMPLE
               489.31505920
                                  22.41132255
         37
Sample
               488.93871650
                                  22.23469787
SAMPLE
         35
               488.96587598
                                  22.23889692
         39
                                  22.24609115
SAMPLE
               469.41218900
         40
                                  22.33118676
Saafle
               488.68984468
SAMPLE
         41
               483.55023360
                                  22.32561588
               487.99785950
         42
Sample
                                  22.21556408
         43
SAMPLE
                                  22.25667786
               484.33155238
               481,96423480
478,49823510
SAMPLE
         44
                                  22.22214379
SAMPLE
         45
                                  21.86604589
SAMPLE
         46
               478.82682168
                                  21.89425871
         47
               478.23115728
                                  21.75203664
SAMPLE
         48
                                  21.75863889
Sample
               477.91551480
         43
                                  21.81935602
SAMPLE
               476.99893808
               478.41325850
         39
SAMPLE
                                  22.00943839
SAMPLE
         51
                                  24.81739184
               500.17436970
               486.39299326
SAMPLE
                                  22.87955238
               479.22057458
481.32081080
SAMPLE
         53
                                  21.94547219
         54
SAMPLE
                                  22.03249620
               464.59863430
485.35131999
         55
Sahple
                                  22.46022927
         56
SAMPLE
                                  22.19211396
         57
               484.79287580
                                  22.12852579
SAMPLE
               496.17077600
         58
SAMPLE
                                  22.23153310
               486.05544510
                                  22.19840125
SAMPLE
         59
         69
               486.46213819
                                  22.24408293
SAMPLE
SAMPLE
         61
               496.06151510
                                  22.24785997
         62
63
               485.52735120
485.27240930
SAMPLE
                                  22.21284204
                                  22.15172042
         64
               484.86875858
                                  22.18714144
```

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FIGURE 11. SAMPLE DATA OF DME STABILITY TESTS (SHEET 2 OF 3)

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SAMPLE 65 485,48595838 22**. 99**14336**0 66** 479.87886930 22.13646989 SAMPLE 22**.00**574770 478.**000**49540 68 SAMPLE 476.56189480 21.73414134 69 70 SAMPLE 21.67887899 476.4465639**0** SAMPLE 476.11878150 21.71072746 SAMPLE 475.52998728 476.07629120 21.67984129 ?1 72 73 SANFLE 21.7?429566 Sample 475.63924800 21 .69393383 74 475.73636870 Sample 21.73684794 7576778 SAMPLE 21.67726082 475.736368?8 SAMPLE 475.22648499 21.72693686 SAMPLE 475.57854759 21.69815441 SAMPLE 475.71815859 . 68694198 SAMPLE 79 476.25839250 96909530 30 SAMPLE 21.62593997 474.64983960 SAMPLE 475.09901400 81 21.80551927 82 83 21.89415956 SAHPLE 476.76229630 SAMPLE 478.03691570 22.01981583 22.99863133 SAMPLE 84 479.33590530 55 SAMPLE 488.08859090 22.14259975 36 87 88 478.47395900 483.79736848 SAMPLE 21,97748298 22.92953982 22.12893597 22.18930352 SAMPLE SAMPLE 481.22975940 89 SHAPLE 483,37248526 487.28143468 SHMPLE 99 21.97541433 91 21.94525699 SAMPLE 483.00328250 92 93 SAMPLE 482.92330198 22.00328124 SAMPLE 482.85846148 21.97445924 94 SAMPLE 481.48470130 22.07288659 95 SAMPLE 22.91948434 460.18571160 SAMPLE SAMPLE 96 483.14789360 21.98954049 97 21.92185909 482.19882650 SAMPLE 476.31302300 21.87101066 98 SAMPLE 477.08391870 98579448 476.36158330 94475819 SAMPLE 101 473.88500500 56759131 SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE 102 473.53901248 .523**0**5143 473.478312**00** 51094649 184 473.46617190 21.48925154

STAND DEV OF GROUP - 27.4722487411

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FIGURE 11. SAMPLE DATA OF DME STABILITY TESTS (SHEET 3 OF 3)

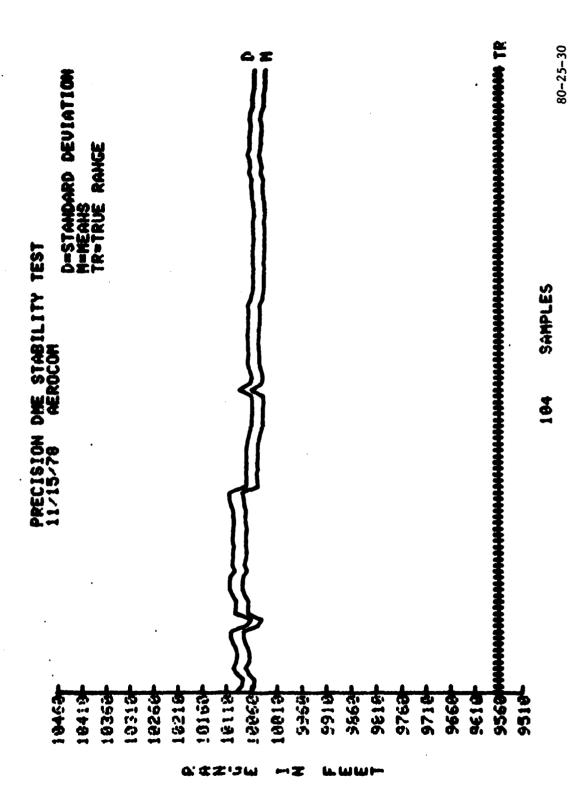


FIGURE 12. PLOT OF DATA, STABILITY TESTS